When disaster strikes, it takes a coordinated team effort to respond to the massive amount of destruction and the needs that result. Planning and Response Teams, or PRTs are an important part of the nation's response and recovery to natural and man-made disasters both within the United States and around the world. There are 41 Mission Planning and Response Teams within the USACE. These teams are staffed and trained to respond to the pre-scripted missions assigned to the USACE as the primary agency for response and the coordination agency for response and recovery under the National Response Framework. This video will provide a thorough description of each mission Planning and Response Team, as well as their functions and locations, and provide an overview of the professional level cadres.

FEMA is the lead agency and initiates Federal action by issuing mission assignments to the leads of the 15 Emergency Support Functions. The Corps is the lead agency for Public Works and Engineering, ESF#3, so this video will cover the roles and functions of ESF#3 teams.

PRTs are sourced and managed for recruitment, training, and readiness by USACE districts. The teams support civil missions under the Stafford Act. Lessons learned from Hurricane Andrew guided the development of these PRTs, which were first fielded in 1998.

Prior to 1998, the Corps operated primarily through a volunteer system, frequently assigning volunteers to particular positions once they arrived in the field in the manner of a "pick-up team." This led to many obvious disadvantages, particularly in matching specific skills sets with needs in the field.

Starting in 1998 with Readiness 2000, the Corps began implementing the dedicated team concept of designing teams specific to the needs of the National Response Framework and the missions commonly assigned to the Corps. Among the many improvements, this system trains teams thoroughly in their specific missions. For example, the commodities team members receive training on commodities-specific material. This division of training has created very efficient avenues for mentoring, after-action, and ownership. These teams have changed over time as more experience is gained through field operations and will continue to change to meet new challenges.

The Readiness XXI initiative, which leverages both civil and military capabilities, reached full operational capability on June 1, 2008. The Readiness Support Center thus became the command and control training and exercise center aligned with Corps headquarters. The alignment facilitates the tactical support of the Annual Training and Exercise Calendar under one organization. Having curriculum development, class design, and workshop and exercise hosting all within one organization for both civil disaster and military contingencies improves efficiency for all and facilitates a previously unrealized cross sharing of tools and capabilities.

Planning and Response Teams are located throughout the Corps, with no team more involved than another. This creates an equal degree of readiness throughout the Corps for missions within the National Response Framework. The Pacific Ocean Division has four districts, of which two have specific mission assignments. Alaska District covers infrastructure assessment, and Honolulu District has emergency power. The Japan District and Far East District are both primarily military districts with

military missions, so they serve as possible resource providers for the other Pacific Ocean Division teams.

The Southwestern Division consists of four divisions, all with mission assignments: The Fort Worth District is assigned to debris; the Galveston District is assigned to commodities; the Little Rock District is assigned to temporary roofing; and the Tulsa District is assigned to emergency power.

The Northwestern Division has five districts, with one district providing two teams. The Kansas City District handles national water; the Omaha District handles temporary roofing; the Portland District is assigned to debris; the Seattle District handles both commodities and infrastructure assessment; and the Walla Walla District handles emergency power.

The South Pacific Division has four districts, with one district again providing two teams. The Albuquerque District is responsible for national ice, the Los Angeles District is assigned to emergency Power; the Sacramento District handles both debris and infrastructure assessment; and the San Francisco District is assigned to commodities.

The Lakes and River Division has more districts than any other division, and all seven divisions together support the entire array of teams. The Buffalo District is responsible for infrastructure assessment, the Chicago District provides resources to the other teams; the Detroit District covers commodities, the Huntington District is assigned to temporary housing; the Louisville District covers debris, the Nashville District handles temporary roofing, and the Pittsburgh District covers emergency power.

The North Atlantic Division has five mission-assigned districts. The Baltimore District is responsible for debris, the New England District is responsible for national water, the New York District covers temporary housing, the Norfolk District handles commodities and the Philadelphia District is responsible for emergency power.

The Mississippi Valley consists of six districts, one of which is not currently assigned a mission. The Memphis District covers emergency power,, the Rock Island District is responsible for commodities, the St. Louis District is responsible for temporary roofing, and the St. Paul District covers temporary housing. The Vicksburg District is responsible for debris, while the New Orleans District is not currently assigned a mission.

The South Atlantic Division has five districts, all of which are assigned missions, with the Charleston District responsible for national ice, the Jacksonville District responsible for temporary roofing, the Mobile District responsible for debris, the Savannah District responsible for emergency power, and the Wilmington District responsible for commodities.

Major Subordinate Commands have the option to deploy and use organic PRTs if not engaged or may request support from HQUSACE. PRTs are configured to provide trained personnel at every organizational level necessary for mission execution including at the District, RFO, JFO, Staging Operations, Emergency Field Office (EFO), NRCC, and RRCC.

PRTs are designated as either response, which includes the National Ice, National Water, Commodities, Urban Search and Rescue, and Power teams, or recovery, which includes Debris, Roofing, Housing, and Infrastructure Assessment. Each PRT is divided into two elements: management and support. The management element is the initial cell requested for deployment. The support element is requested as required.

PRTs will be placed on alert only when there is an imminent threat or when an event has occurred that could result in FEMA Mission Assignments. The number of PRTs alerted will vary depending on the specific event. For a major event, the top three-to-four PRTs will be alerted in each potential mission area. PRTs are always on alert for events within their Major Subordinate Command AO. Once on alert, the PRTs are required to be in transit within six hours of deployment notification.

The teams are structured to fit Corps operations. The positions that are common to all Planning and Response Teams are an ESF#3 action officer, a mission manager, a mission specialist, and a contract specialist. Support members are added to teams in accordance with mission needs, particularly in extended missions during heavy catastrophic disaster. Additional staff for night shifts may be required.

The ESF#3 action officer plays the role of the program manager, working at the Joint Field Office (JFO), for the ESF#3 team leader by overseeing scoping, tasking, and coordination issues. They are located with 27 other Federal agencies, so manpower is readily available to make changes, help eradicate issues in the field, and support the mission manager.

During recovery missions, the Corps mission manger functions as the project manager, working out of the Recovery Field Office (RFO), for the Corps Division forward commander. The mission manager is responsible for executing all aspects of the mission from his position at a Federal or State staging area.

The mission specialist for the recovery missions also works in the RFO at a Federal or State staging area. He supports the mission manager and provides briefing documents, data collections, and upper-reporting requirements. He stands in for the mission manager as required.

The contract specialist for the recovery missions works within the RFO, providing contract support to the mission manager and the contracting officer. This position is the SME on the ACI Contract for their mission and joins the staff of the district's contracting officer. The contracting officer has the primary responsibilities for all the contracting operations, with the exception of national ice and national water.

Mission Subject Matter Experts are technically experienced experts in a specific field who provide support to PRTs, FEMA, and State and Local Governments. They usually deploy for 10 to 12 days, but SMEs deployed in support of large debris missions may work up to 30 days.

The National Ice and National Water Teams are comprised of the positions shown here. They support national priorities by procuring and delivering the commodities, then tracking the commodities to the first delivery point. The Commodities Teams will then track and report on all subsequent commodity movements. The National Ice and Water teams work at the National Response Coordination Center located in Washington, D.C., from their home station, and at the first designated delivery point(s).

The Commodities Teams include these positions. As mentioned previously, the Commodities teams work in the field and provide a mission liaison to the RFO to provide information and data reporting. These teams track all Corps commodities movements and account for contractual requirements.

Power Teams are made up with these positions, including members from the 249th Prime Power Battalion, who are experts on power generation and power requirements. The power team works with contractors to install FEMA-furnished generators at critical facilities. The team is responsible for installing, maintaining, removing, and decommissioning the generators for storage.

Temporary housing is one of the largest PRTs, because a diversity of workers are required for its many functions, including laying out a temporary housing site, providing sanitary water, and all other site development issues.

The roofing mission typically supports high-wind events by managing contractors to install FEMA-provided plastic for damaged roofs**.** The primary purpose of the roofing mission is to allow people to shelter in place. A secondary purpose is to help storm victims preserve their household belongings from further damage until permanent repairs may be made. First, the Corps requires that each homeowner provide written permission to enter their private property and also agree to hold the government harmless for claims. This is called “Rights of Entry,” (ROE). In very large disasters where hundreds of thousands of homes may be involved, one team will work the ROE process and another will install the roofs.

The Debris Team consists of approximately 15 positions including the ESF#3 action officer, mission manager, mission specialist, contract specialist, and resident engineer, and a management team that may be sent to a disaster site early in the mission. Once a disaster is declared, or if it develops into a full mission, the remainder of the team will follow. In most cases, multiple debris teams are needed. These teams cover debris removal from public and private property, waterways, and structural demolition.

The Infrastructure Assessment Team support efforts for an earthquake event producing structural damage in the initial quake or aftershock. The primary mission is to assess the condition of buildings and homes to see if they are safe for inhabitance. This team manages these assessments and trains other engineers to rapidly determine if structures are safe to occupy.

Lead divisions are assigned at these PRT divisions. Lead divisions manage specific sets of teams and the Subject Matter Expert cadres ensure consistent communications up and down the teams. They produce and update mission guides and Standard Operating Procedures. They assure consistency and readiness for their assigned teams. They are responsible for the planning for training and assuring lessons learned are incorporated into the SOPs and annual training sessions.

Functional Planning and Response Teams and cadres provide highly trained personnel to support emergency response operations. They are also needed to provide professional functional support to augment the Supported division or district in response to a natural or man-made disaster.

Team leaders are experienced credentialed personnel who fill key response positions at the National Response Coordination Center, Regional Response Coordination Center, Emergency Response Team Advance, and Joint Field Office. During response operations, team leaders work directly for the Division Forward Commander and are Operation Control to FEMA as part of the FCO's staff. Team Leaders are responsible for receiving mission assignments, assuring adequate funding, and working with the supported division in executing missions.

Assistant team leaders work with team leaders in providing assistance. Assistant team leaders are credentialed and rated during every deployment. Based upon performance, they are promoted to team leaders. Not all candidates who compete for the ATL team fall within the top 40. Currently the Corps has approximately 21 TLs and 40 ATLs.

Cadres who have received specialized training specific to emergency missions are available to support response efforts across the Corps. For example, the GIS cadre provides Geographic Information System support to the National Response Coordination Center, the Regional Response Coordination Center, the Joint Field Office, and the supported division or district. They also provide geospatial, satellite imagery, and modeling capabilities.

Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) is composed of structural engineers specially trained in shoring, crane rigging and mitigating hazards that may cause a collapse.

The Local Government Liaison Cadre is located at the Local Government level of the Emergency Operations Center. It keeps the Local Government informed of Corps missions and programs, and communicates local information back to the Corps. This cadre serves as the "eyes and ears on the ground" for the Corps. Members of this cadre are nominated annually and are required to fulfill one week in a residency-training course.

This video has provided a brief overview of each mission Planning and Response Team, as well as their functions and locations. It has also described the professional level cadres and their functions.